

VZCZCXRO8325  
OO RUEHAST  
DE RUEHVJ #2361/01 2761657  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 031657Z OCT 06  
FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4556  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUFOAOA/USNIC SARAJEVO PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 SARAJEVO 002361

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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIAN ELECTIONS: PRESIDENCY COUNT FINAL BUT  
PARLIAMENT RESULTS UNCLEAR

REF: A. SARAJEVO 2329

[1](#)B. SARAJEVO 2279

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#### Summary

[1](#)1. (SBU) Vote counting for the October 1 national elections is continuing. In the evening of October 2, the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Bosnia and Herzegovina confirmed Haris Silajdzic, Nebojsa Radmanovic and Zeljko Komsic as the winners of Bosniak, Serb and Croat seats on the Tri-Presidency and delivered preliminary, and incomplete, results of legislative elections. In a departure from past elections, vote tabulation is proceeding slowly, with counting complete in only 45 percent of Federation and 65 of Republika Srpska (RS) municipalities, according to the CEC. Although legislative returns are incomplete, they suggest SNSD will have a plurality among the RS delegation to the State Parliament and an absolute majority in the RS National Assembly (RSNA). Although the SDA may remain the largest Bosniak party in Parliament, SBiH has greatly undermined its influence. Dodik and Silajdzic are already signaling that they are prepared to cooperate in State-level issues, however, the nationalist invective of the campaign season will probably complicate both leaders' ability to cooperate in the near term. The Croat reaction to the election of Zeljko Komsic has been emotional and disorganized with Ivo Miro Jovic, despite his own party's concession, still claiming the Croat Presidency. The SDP, despite the Komsic win, remains the weakest of the three Bosniak parties and is growing increasingly concerned that it will be denied a meaningful coalition role. Although Parliamentary results remain unclear, the SBiH and SNSD victories may portend near-term difficulties for USG priorities such as constitutional and police reform. The coalition-building process is likely to be a lengthy one, and it may be several months until a new government is seated. End Summary.

#### Preliminary Elections Results:

[1](#)2. (U) In the evening of October 2 at 2100, the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Bosnia and Herzegovina confirmed the three winning candidates for the Tri-Presidency. Nebojsa Radmanovic of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) was elected to the Serb presidency. Haris Silajdzic of the Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH) was elected to the Bosniak seat. Zeljko Komsic of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was elected to the Croat Presidency. Milan Jelic was also confirmed as the new RS President. The electoral opponents of all three Presidents elect have conceded defeat.

Under Bosnian electoral law, the CEC has until October 31 to certify the election results, at which point they become final.

¶3. (SBU) In the same briefing the CEC released preliminary results (based on 40-45 percent of the vote) on the overall vote received by each party competing for seats in the State Parliament. Projection of seats in each electoral district is not possible until all votes are counted. However, as a result of the landslide victory of SNSD in the Republika Srpska (RS), it is almost certain that the SNSD will win a plurality in the State Parliament and an absolute majority in the RS National Assembly (RSNA). Preliminary vote counts suggest that the Party for Democratic Action (SDA) will probably remain the largest Bosniak party in Parliament but the strong showing by SBiH will erode SDA influence. After initial euphoria over the election of Zeljko Komsic to the Croat Presidency, SDP is moderating its high expectations for seats in State Parliament. Other parties that are likely to win between two and four seats in the State Parliament include the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ), the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) and HDZ-1990. One or two of the minor national parties, including the Party of Democratic Progress (PDP) and the may also cross the three percent threshold to win a single seat in Parliament.

#### Vote Count Complications

¶4. (SBU) In contrast with past elections, vote counting by the CEC is proceeding slowly. According to Bosnian election law, vote counts must be completed in each municipality with ballots subsequently forwarded to Sarajevo for CEC confirmation. As of 2100 on October 2, only 45 percent of Federation and 65 percent of RS municipalities had completed vote tabulation. According to mission contacts at the CEC, the most significant delays have occurred in Tuzla, Prijedor

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and certain districts in Sarajevo and are primarily due to unspecified technical and transportation problems. Although allegations of irregularities abound, primarily disseminated by losing parties, post has no concrete information indicating that delays in vote counting are the result of fraud or vote tampering.

#### The National Political Landscape

¶5. (SBU) For the first time in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina the three establishment national parties (SDA, SDS and HDZ) have been shut out of the Presidency. SBiH and SNSD succeeded at the polls largely due to the same nationalistic campaigning for which they had been criticizing SDA and SDS for more than a decade, however. Silajdzic highlighted his nationalist credentials by emphasizing his actions undermining constitutional reform, while Dodik made liberal use of Pan-Serb secessionism. Although Dodik and Silajdzic are already signaling that they are prepared to cooperate in State-level issues, the nationalist invective of the campaign season will probably complicate both leaders' ability to cooperate in the near term. The SDP, despite the Komsic win, is politically isolated and growing increasingly concerned that it will be denied a coalition role. In the current atmosphere, further complicated by the slow pace of vote counting, the coalition-building process is likely to be a lengthy one. It may be several months until a new government is seated.

#### Bosniak Realignment

¶6. (SBU) The landslide victory of Bosniak President-elect Haris Silajdzic has provided him a compelling mandate among the Bosniak electorate. Anecdotal evidence suggests that

Silajdzic is already taking advantage of his bully pulpit in the initial stages of the coalition-building process. Incumbent Bosniak President Sulejman Tihic, and his SDA, have been severely weakened and Tihic's continued leadership of the party is in serious doubt. The SDA is already under pressure to modify its policies in order to enter into coalition with the newly dominant SBiH. SDA members have begun discussing the possibility of an extraordinary party congress this year during which party policies and leadership would be reconsidered. SDA members from the more conservative wing of the party appear to be on the ascendant.

#### Croat Reaction

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¶17. (SBU) Though they fretted about it before the election, establishment Croat parties were unprepared for the election of Zeljko Komsic to the Croat Presidency and are struggling to find their post-election footing. Per ref B, the division of the Croat vote between HDZ and HDZ-1990 was a significant factor in the election of Komsic and Croat political leaders.

Notably, both Croatian President Stjepan Mesic and Prime Minister Ivo Sanader have stated that Bosnian elections were free and fair and results are legitimate. HDZ Presidential candidate Ivo Miro Jovic has appeared particularly off-balance since election day. In an October 2 television interview he stated that either "Ivo Miro Jovic is the Croat member of the Presidency or there will not be any Bosnian Presidency at all." In a separate statement Jovic insisted that he had been elected to the Presidency and that if attempts are made to challenge him "something shocking is going to happen in this country, something tragic," Jovic added that Komsic will not take this seat because he did not receive "a single vote of a true Croat." Jovic also said that Croats can express their dissatisfaction by leaving the country." Yesterday HDZ spokesman Miso Relota asserted that that the Komsic victory portends a serious political crisis and a Komsic presidency will turn Bosnian Croats into a national minority.

¶18. (SBU) Shock within the Croat community over having unwillingly played into the hands of SDP may result in a gradual rapprochement of the estranged parties HDZ-BiH and HDZ 1990 and of the other Croat-dominated parties, such as HSP-DJ/NHI and NSRB, both of which have benefited from the HDZ decline. It cannot be ruled out, however, that in the short run the newly emerged Croat pluralism will result in paralysis, thus strengthening radical Croat circles and self-rule tendencies outside Parliament.

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#### Dodik Consolidates Power in the RS

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¶19. (U) SDS President Dragan Cavic issued a statement early on October 2 conceding defeat to the SDS at all levels of the RS and State government and congratulated SNSD candidates on their victories. For his part, statements by RS PM Milorad Dodik were generally temperate in contrast to his campaign rhetoric. Dodik said that the scale of the SNSD win bodes well for an absolute majority in the RSNA and that the elections illustrated that the SNSD and the continued existence of the RS were now permanent realities in Bosnia. Dodik stated he would remain as RS PM and that SNSD was in the process of deciding its nominee for the State Prime Minister (Chairman of the Council of Ministers).

¶10. (SBU) At an October 2 SNSD press conference, the party released unofficial results based on incomplete tallies. With ninety per cent of the votes counted in individual races, SNSD claimed that Milan Jelic led Dragan Cavic for the RS Presidency by 62 to 37 per cent, while Nebojsa Radmanovic led Mladen Bosic 68 to 31 per cent. In the race for the state parliament, with

40 per cent of votes counted, SNSD claimed to be leading with 59 per cent, followed by SDS with 20 per cent and PDP with 5 percent. SNSD claimed a lead of 52 percent in the SNA, compared to the SDS 20 percent. Dodik's dramatic success could make state-level reform more difficult. Dodik's victory will legitimize his intention to be treated, both by Sarajevo and the IC, as an autonomous negotiating partner. The SNSD victory could also cause the SDS to move towards a more hard-line opposition stance and refuse to participate in SNSD reform negotiations.

#### Implications for U.S. Interests

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¶11. (SBU) Although Parliamentary results remain unclear, current trends portend near-term challenges for USG priorities such as constitutional and police reform. Silajdzic's resounding victory is the single most important complicating factor in the prospect for the reform process. Current electoral returns suggest that HDZ-1990, the other outspoken party opposing Constitutional Reform, will receive a solid mandate in Croat cantonal-level races. If these trends continue, the result could be a new anti-Constitutional reform Croat caucus in the State level House of Peoples. Milorad Dodik's overwhelming mandate has given him the ability, if he chooses, to indefinitely block police reform and therefore Bosnia's Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU. Preliminary soundings give us reason for guarded optimism that, flush with its strong show of support, SNSD will stake out a more statesmanlike position. But if goaded by Silajdzic or others the spirit of cooperation could quickly unravel.

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